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Teaching media translation: which one to choose, technical or non-technical media-based lessons?

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Abstract

One of the most challenging issues ahead of translation teachers is to choose suitable teaching material and techniques for the media translation courses. With the advent of new technologies and the dramatic change they've gone through, teachers have a wide variety of options at their disposal to choose from. To name a couple of them one can think of the internet, data projectors, satellite receivers, CD and DVD, education software, digital dictionaries, mp³ players, VHS, VCD, and DVD players, etc. In this paper attempt has been made to provide an overview of the use of technical media as a tool for media translation instruction. First a definition will be given of technical media comparing to that of non-technical media. Then, attention will be paid is on the necessity of incorporating the former in the media translation courses. Another issue to be put forward is a discussion of an eclectic selection of technical media-based materials. At this level, the article suggests a framework for structuring lessons using such a type of technology for media translation courses. The aim is to give translation teachers a better insight into the use of new technologies in the classrooms.

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Keywords: Technical media, Non-technical media, Translation, Media Translation

1 Introduction

a type of pedagogical utilisation of the media intended to teach the critical-reflective use of all media. Where media become important for human socialisation as a means of information, entertainment, education and day-to-day organisation, they become the subject of media education – the media are the subject and object of education (education on media).

Media education concerns all communication media and their combinations made possible by the so-called New Media. These communication media are constituent parts of all texts, regardless of the technology: the word, printed/spoken, graphics, sound, stills and moving pictures. The so-called New Media (including the Internet), being developments and combinations of the above modules, are essentially technologies that serve their distribution and have an effect on several social dimensions. Critical reflection on the possible effects is also included in media education.

The potential to combine data of all kinds into gigantic information networks and to make use of these both in a working and a domestic environment, i.e. to obtain, access and process them, causes the boundaries to be blurred

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between individual and mass communication, between the book and newspaper markets, between entertainment and business communication. It is especially in the New Media segment that media education is confronted with new issues concerning its autonomous critical use. The use of technology may be traced to the 1970s and 1980s under the audio-lingual method. At that time, there were obligatory sessions at the language laboratory where learners would perform drills. Since the 1980s, there has been a shift toward language use. Technologies that support this new emphasis are those that allow maximum opportunity to be engaged with language in meaningful, authentic contexts. Recent, drastic advances in technology have further inspired many teachers, around the world, with plenty of new ideas regarding ESL/EFL (English as a second language/ English as a foreign language) instruction. This article explores the use of technical media in translation teaching and learning. In this line of thought, it proposes specific ways regarding the integration of this type of media into the classroom. A caveat that should be mentioned is that technical media can never replace teachers, rather its use aims at further enhancing the effectiveness of teaching, and consequently at facilitating the learning process.

2 Language teaching media: technical and non-technical

Brinton (2001) distinguishes between two types of media: technical and non-technical. The former refers those technological innovations in language teaching which involve the use of mechanical paraphernalia. Examples include video players; OHPs (overhead projectors); self-access centres. The later type of media refers to those teacher-made, non-mechanical aids, like drawings; wall charts; maps; or realia from daily life such as fruits and travel pamphlets.

3 Reasons for using technical media in translation pedagogy

There are a number of reasons why teachers should present their classroom lessons using technical media. First, technical media brings real life into the classroom, which means that language is presented in its complete communicative contexts, and opportunities become available to ESL/EFL learners for experimenting with the target language and negotiating meaning, in meaningful ways with authentic materials. In this context, DeKeyser (2007) writes that teachers can: “integrate true communication with systematic practice rather than to disconnect practice from communication”. This may ultimately boost learners’ motivation. Furthermore, with the ever -increasing accessibility of technology, learners’ styles are developing and extending (Flowerdew and Miller, 2005). Technical media represents a way of addressing the needs of those learners with visual and auditory learning styles, which may result in an effective learner processing of the lesson. Additionally, technical media reduces the burden on teachers as it frees them from extensive explanations. Finally, Chappelle (2001) maintains that it is inevitable that the more a teacher employs technical media in the classroom, the less teacher-centred and the more student-centred a classroom will become. In technical media-based lessons, learner autonomy and learner-centeredness can be promoted through allowing students to work collaboratively in pairs or small groups, where they can engage in interactive problem-solving activities or cooperative projects.

4 Technical media in the Translation classroom: when and how to use it

Merely including Technical media in language instruction does not guarantee the desired results. Blake (2001) urges language teachers to use technology when its application proves consistent with best practices in teaching and with language learning theory. Hence, before incorporating technical media in a classroom lesson it is essential to consider whether or not it should be used at all, and how it should be integrated in a lesson. Technical media should not be used for the sake of it; therefore the following questions should be asked:

- a. Are learners and their teacher adequately trained to use technical media?
- b. Can technical media facilitate teaching in a way that may not be achieved by non-technical media?
- c. Can technical media help achieve the target objective(s), and hence, the desired learning outcome(s)?
- d. Are the necessary software and hardware available?

Once the individual teacher has made up his mind to use technical media in a classroom lesson, then he needs to take into consideration a number of points:

- a. The skills that are targeted;

- b. The objective(s) of the lesson (for example, teaching a specific translation function);
- c. The types of technical media which are suitable to achieve the target objective(s).

Throughout the rest of this section, a framework will be proposed for technical media- based lessons, which is partly adapted from Brinton (2001). It is also based on the literature found to be relevant in the field of language teaching and learning. The framework comprises the following steps:

- a. Getting learners engaged
- b. Activating learners' schemata
- c. Presentation
- d. Practice

In the beginning of each lesson, the teacher tries to arouse learners' interests so as to generate their motivation. The activities that can be used at this level include: games, crosswords, discussions,... . These are called warmers and do not usually take more than ten minutes. The teacher should also try to activate learners' background knowledge. It should be pointed out that warmers can be used for generating learners' interest as well as activating their schemata. After that, the translation item/strategy, that is the lessons' objective, should explained by the teacher in a way that facilitates the learning process. During the Practice step learners practise that translation item/strategy. Finally, learners are given more activities to help them process the lesson more effectively, and transfer what they learned to new situations.

4.1 Sample lesson

This section describes how technical media can be used to address translation skills, through suggesting a number of lessons.

Translation Skill: media translation

Objective: teaching vocabulary related to politics

Material: news from a news network

Technical media: audio player, OHP

1. The teacher asks his learners about their favourite headline relating to politics.
2. Learners have to listen to a piece of news. First they listen to the broadcaster to fill in the gaps with the appropriate political jargons. Then, they watch some pictures on OHP and try to match each jargon with a relating picture.
3. Learners are divided into groups, each one looks for a headline (either of their country or of international) to present it in the class.
4. Coordinated by the teacher, students can judge one another's work and give suggestions to their friends to make their work better.

This is a sample of what a teacher can do using technological devices. A teacher can utilize modern facilities with attention to the needs of their students and characteristics of the classroom. Other technological facilities and media can also be used in the media translation work shop like internet and different websites to help students have access to the latest news and change of style/jargon in the media or blogging as a concrete example for the students to run their own news agency. This helps students find their self-esteem and face the problems of a translator who deals with such texts. Another option is to provide students with access to two parallel texts of the same story in source and target texts via internet, recorded tapes/videos.

5. Conclusion

Translation teachers have now more technology at their disposal to enhance translation learning. Technical media can be incorporated into some translation classroom lessons to develop language skills, like listening, speaking and the fifth skill that is, translation. However, it should be mentioned that this type of technology is not a substitute for the teacher, and it cannot transform a bad teacher into a good one. Therefore, for effective implementation of technical media in translation teaching, instructors must know when and how to use it. What is more, a prerequisite

requirement is ongoing technical literacy training, both for teachers and for students to develop the basic, necessary technical skills.

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